Uniform tax rates for tourists

*460. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

SHRI RAMAMUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has realised that the fundamental problem plaguing the tourism sector of the country is multitude of Central and State-level taxes resulting in loss of number of tourists to other countries such as China, Thailand, Singapore, Hongkong, Malaysia, etc;

(b) if so, what the Ministry proposes to do in co-ordination with the Finance Ministry and the State Governments to have a uniform taxation or single tax for tourists in the country;

(c) whether the issue had come up before the recently held State Tourism Ministers' Conference in March, 2005; and

(d) if so, what is the outcome of the discussions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) and (b) Various taxes on tourism industry have an impact on the competitiveness of our destinations. The matter has been taken up with the Inter-State Council as most of the taxes fall within the purview of the State Governments.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The State Governments/Union Territories have been advised to rationalise tourism related taxes.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

International airport for Kolkata

3401. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Japan has offered to build a state of the art international airport for Kolkata;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir. No proposal has been received by Airports Authority of India from Government of Japan to build an International Airport at Kolkata.

(b) and (c) Do hot arise.

Upgradation of Delhi Airport

3402. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are seeking private sector participation in upgradation of Delhi Airport;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether upgradation of infrastructure is to be completed before the start of Commonwealth Games; and

(d) if so, the details of the funds being provided for the purpose and when the work is likely to commence?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Expression of Interest (Eol) was invited through Global Tender for restructuring and modernisation of Delhi and Mumbai airports. Ten consortia submitted Eols, out of which nine pre-qualified for Request for Proposal (RFP) stage. The pre-qualified bidders have been issued the RFP documents on 1.4.2005 to enable them to submit their technical and financial bids within a period of 12 weeks.

(c) and (d) The Joint Venture Company will be required to take up mandatory capital projects to be executed within 5 years for Delhi Airport coinciding with the organisation of Commonwealth Games in the year 2010 at an estimated cost of Rs. 4220 Crore.

Removal of First Class seats in Al flights

3403. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Air India has decided to remove First Class seats in their flights to benefit the Economy Class passengers; and

(b) if so, whether the First Class seats are closed for commercial reasons?